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ILLUSTRATING AN ANTHRACITE ERA THE PHOTOGRAPHIC LEGACY OF JOHN HORGAN JR.

Gwendoline E. Percival and Chester J. Kulesa



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John Horgan Jr. shown seated in his darkroom in Ecuador
Courtesy of William Sidney Horgan Jr.
1902

ILLUSTRATING AN ANTHRACITE ERA: THE PHOTOGRAPHIC LEGACY OF JOHN HORGAN JR.

Gwendoline E. Percival and Chester J. Kulesa

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
**Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and
Anthracite Heritage Museum and Iron Furnaces Associates**
1995

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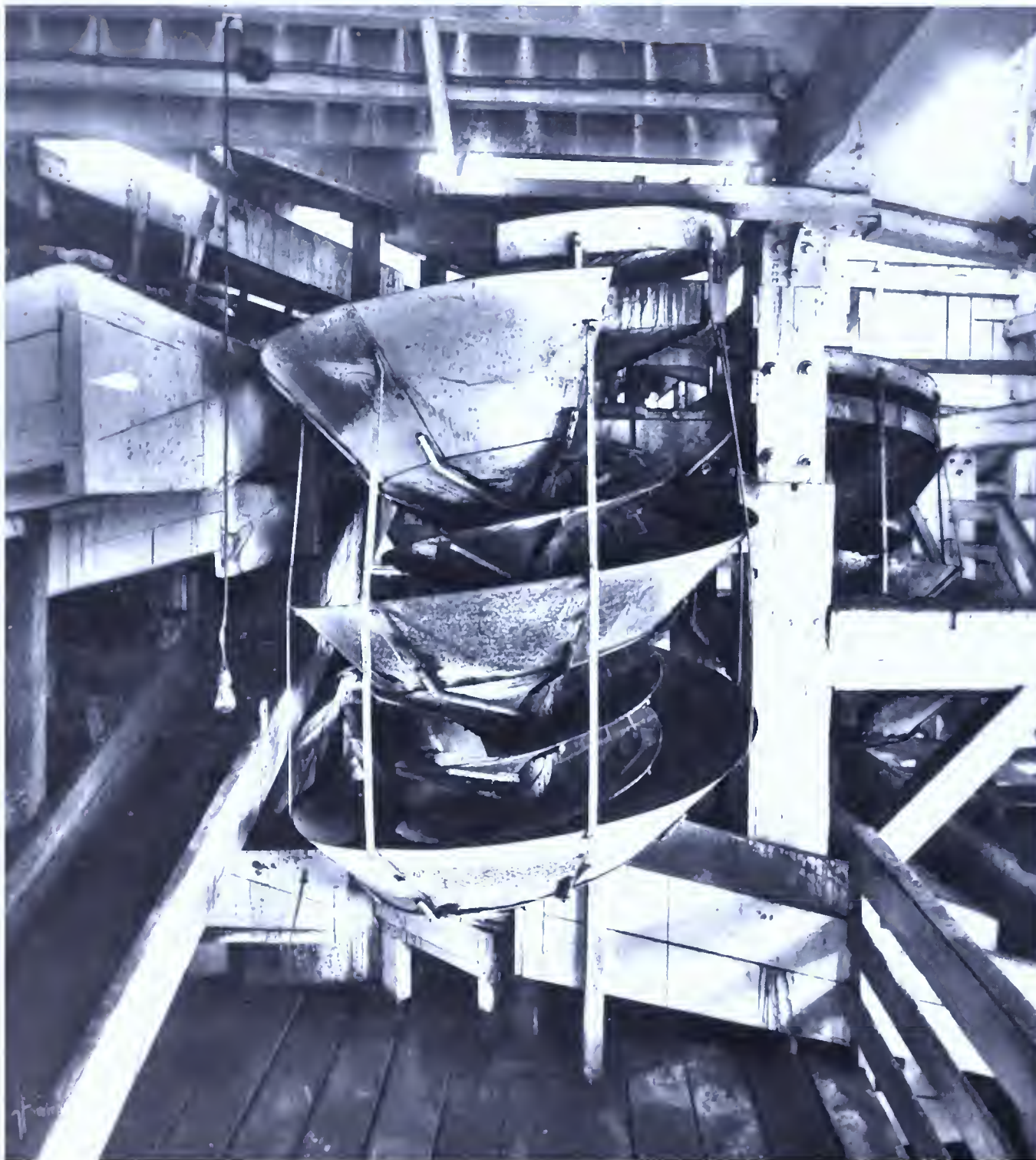
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Reproduction of the Horgan images was accomplished by two talented local photographers. Ken Ganz spent many hours in the Anthracite Heritage Museum's darkroom diligently printing the images from copy negatives, original glass plates, and nitrocellulose negatives. Many of the copy negatives were made by George Pugh of Clarks Summit.

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INT.[ERIOR] OF OLD BREAKER SHOWING SPIRAL PICKERS
Loree Breaker, Larksville, Luzerne County, PA.
HORGAN #15547, c. 1917

INTRODUCTION

The images of John Horgan Jr., came to the attention of the staff of the Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum at Scranton in 1980. They were included in a large donation of more than two thousand glass plate and nitrocellulose-based negatives made by surveyor and engineer, John R. Hennemuth. The collection dates from 1909 to 1939. The images, the majority of which were photographed by Horgan, were originally part of the Hudson Coal Company's extensive collection of photographs relating to the firm's assets, legal cases, publications, and so forth.

Over the years the collection was organized and cataloged. A portion of the images was displayed as part of a Horgan exhibit entitled "Illustrating An Era," which opened at the Museum in November 1992. Due to the unstable nature of nitrocellulose film, many of the negatives show significant deterioration. An ongoing effort is underway to reproduce the collection onto archival quality paper and reproduction negatives.

The images presented in this book represent a mere sampling of the more than twenty thousand Horgan made during his lifetime. They were selected with the intention of best exemplifying the breadth and quality of the anthracite photographs that he produced for Hudson Coal.



PAY DAY OLYPHANT COLLIERY.
Olyphant, Lackawanna County, PA.
HORGAN #13437, 1915

PENNSYLVANIA'S ANTHRACITE INDUSTRY

Among the many achievements of John Horgan Jr. was the pictorial record he created of Pennsylvania's anthracite coal industry at its pinnacle. Specifically, he documented the Delaware and Hudson Coal Company (D & H) and its subsidiary, Hudson Coal, beginning in 1905 and continuing until just before his death in 1926. The D & H was one of the earliest and most extensive mining operations in the northern coal field, a canoe-shaped area made up of the Wyoming and Lackawanna Valleys and including the cities of Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, and Carbondale. Horgan's images provide a glimpse of the men and machines that mined, processed, and moved "king" coal to market.

For nearly one hundred years the mining of anthracite dominated life in northeastern Pennsylvania, and provided America with a ready energy source for home and industry. Hard coal helped fuel America's Industrial Revolution. It powered massive steam engines, fed a new breed of blast furnaces, and warmed countless homes and factories. Almost pure carbon, anthracite coal provides steady and intense heat with little smoke. To entrepreneurs and inventors alike it seemed particularly well suited to a nation eager to show the world its industrial prowess and reap the profit of its natural resources.

The anthracite industry was established during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Although many had been aware of hard coal's value as a source of heat since before the American Revolution, widespread appreciation and demand for it took some time to emerge. Following the War of 1812, special fire grates for burning anthracite gained in usage. As demand increased, transportation systems developed to haul coal over mountainous terrain to the major markets of New York and Philadelphia.

Of the approximately thirty-three hundred square miles that are collectively termed Pennsylvania's hard coal region, only four hundred eighty-four square miles are actually underlain with workable coal deposits. The region is further subdivided into four distinct geographic areas or fields—northern, eastern middle, western middle, and southern. These are spread across ten counties ranging from Susquehanna County in the northeast to Dauphin County in the south-central portion of the Commonwealth.

In the northern field, early coal shipments moved to market via the North Branch Canal along the Susquehanna River and the D & H's gravity railroad at Carbondale, which connected to the D & H canal at

Honesdale. These links, together with similar systems in the other fields, helped to meet a growing demand for hard coal. Soon, however, these proved inadequate and coal operators turned to steam-powered locomotives.

Initially, railroads supplemented the canal system, but by mid-century trains had overtaken canal boats as the primary means for shipping coal. Even more significantly, the railroad companies and their subsidiary mining operations soon dominated the industry as the business of mining anthracite shifted from small partnerships to large corporations. Railroad companies like the D & H saw great opportunities not only in transporting the coal being mined but in controlling its source as well. The railroads, moreover, had the capital necessary to purchase vast parcels of coal-bearing land and establish large-scale mining operations. By 1907, the anthracite railroads produced either directly or indirectly some sixty million tons annually, or seventy-eight percent of the total anthracite mined that year. In order to comply with anti-monopoly laws such as the Heburn Act of 1906, the anthracite railroads formed wholly owned subsidiary coal companies to engage in mining and processing.

By the time Horgan moved to Scranton in 1903, five separate coal-hauling railroads converged there: the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western; the Delaware and Hudson; the Central Railroad of New Jersey; the New York, Ontario, and Western; and the Erie Railroad. These, together with their mining operations, helped to make Scranton the "Anthracite Capital of the World." The nearly continuous chain of coal cars passing through Scranton during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was but the final step in a series of processes that brought anthracite from mine to market.

In the early years, easily accessible surface outcrops of anthracite met the limited demand. As markets expanded, though, operators penetrated the earth to follow or search for the most profitable veins. Termed "deep" mining, the process centered on the mine worker laboring in a dangerous and alien environment with what amounted to the most basic hand tools and blasting apparatus. Sudden rock falls, explosions, and accidents involving machinery claimed tens of thousands of lives.

The work of the miner consisted primarily of drilling one or more holes in the coal face, inserting and firing an explosive charge, and loading the resulting pieces of coal, with help from his laborer, into mine cars. Additional duties included placing timbers to support the roof and occasionally laying and removing rails. The vast majority of the work was hard manual labor. Mechanization, such as the use of undercutting machines, was generally limited to veins that were often less than twenty-eight inches high—too thin to be economically mined by using hand methods. The hauling of coal eventually entailed an increasing application of automation, with the introduction of shaker conveyors, scraper-loaders, and electric and battery locomotives.

By the turn of the century, the anthracite industry employed some 143,816 individuals, above and below ground. The work force included occupations such as fire bosses, slate pickers, mule drivers, door

boys, laborers, and miners. Industry employment peaked in 1914, with 180,000 people involved in some aspect of anthracite mining. For many years, the mines provided a ready source of employment to thousands of immigrants anxious to find a job.

Mine workers lived in the shadow of the breaker. A looming multi-story structure, this was where coal, fresh from the earth, was crushed, sorted, cleaned, and loaded onto rail cars destined for market. In 1918, D & H breakers processed 11,263,456 tons of coal, making the company the third largest anthracite producer for that year. The leading firm was the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company; it was followed by the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Coal Company. By the time of Horgan's death in 1926, Hudson Coal owned six breakers and fourteen mines and during that year processed 9,165,802 tons of coal.

Pennsylvania's anthracite industry reached its greatest production in 1917 during World War I, with over one hundred million tons of coal mined, processed, and sent to market. By that time, however, hard coal had lost a significant portion of its share of America's energy market. This was due to a number of forces that combined to erode anthracite's competitive position.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, heavy industry, particularly steel manufacture, relied increasingly on coke, a derivative of soft coal, in place of anthracite as the fuel of choice. As the industrial center of America shifted westward, companies took advantage of nearby bituminous coal deposits as a cheaper alternative. For home heating, consumers came to prefer the convenience of oil and gas. Furthermore, as the earth was mined at deeper and deeper levels, coal operators found it necessary to pump more air into the workings and remove a greater volume of water—both costly operations. By 1930, Hudson Coal was pumping eighty-five million tons of acidic water out of the mines every year. This amounted to twenty-three tons of water for every ton of coal extracted. The resulting cost increases, combined with frequent labor disputes and restrictive mining laws, further diminished hard coal's competitiveness.

Although World War II bolstered the anthracite industry, the effect was only temporary. The long decline in production was accompanied by a steady decrease in employment. Between 1914 and 1993 the work force employed in the anthracite fields dropped from 180,000 employees to 1,800. Current annual production stands at about three and a half million tons.

Today, Pennsylvania's anthracite industry is a remnant of what it once was. Where towering breakers and head frames dotted the landscape, all that remains in many places are culm piles and rubble. Even so, advancing technology is finding new uses for lower grade anthracite in the cogeneration of electricity, while research scientists are studying its value as a source of advanced carbon-based materials and specialty chemicals.

The most enduring legacy of the industry is the diverse culture that developed as a result of the tens of thousands who came to the region from more than fifty countries—attracted by work in the mines and

mills. Although the physical remains of this once-dominant industry are disappearing from the region's landscape, the impact anthracite exerted in molding the character of northeastern Pennsylvania remains. Through the preservation of artifacts and images such as the Horgan photographs, we are able to gain a greater understanding of the people and the industry that shaped the life of Pennsylvania's hard coal region.

Daniel K. Perry, *Director*
Everhart Museum, Scranton

INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE AND WORK OF JOHN HORGAN JR. 1859-1926

Behind the camera focused on the remarkable views in this book stands John Horgan Jr., a commercial documentary photographer whose career spanned almost half a century. A self-styled “illustrating photographer,” Horgan produced high quality photographs for major American industries during the peak periods of their growth from the 1880’s to 1926. During this time America, with her vast natural resources, cheap immigrant labor, and the skill and ingenuity of her people, evolved from a developing nation into the major industrial power in the world.

Horgan’s work in the United States, and Central and South America, distinguishes him as an important industrial photographer nationally and internationally. Although the major projects in his career involved industrial scenes, he also photographed many landscape views. His images were widely circulated among the public both in the United States and in Europe, as stereoscopic cards, postcards, illustrations for magazines such as *National Geographic*, *New South*, *Coal Age*, *Engineering Magazine* of Baltimore, *Manufacturer’s Record* of Pittsburgh, and publications of the McGraw-Hill Company, the International Correspondence Schools, and the Pan American Union, and in various newspapers.¹ The majority of these published images appear without Horgan’s signature.

Beginning in 1885 Horgan kept meticulous business diaries. Most of the diaries for the years he resided in Scranton, Pennsylvania, have survived, passed down through his family. These have been invaluable in identifying and dating his images and show the wide range of clients, from shopkeepers to major corporations, with whom he conducted business. They also provide a fascinating, though tantalizingly incomplete, glimpse at the lifestyle of this energetic man. His entries, in common with the diaries of many late nineteenth century middle-class American men,² are brief notations. He recorded customers, his location, weather conditions and the number of negatives obtained, with some personal comments. A competent businessman, Horgan recorded the cash due from each client. There is also an extensive though less complete account of his general living expenses. From 1905, when he bought his first car, the cost of oil, gas, and car repairs is often noted. However the diaries reveal no sources for the photographic influences that

shaped his vision. Nor have we discovered any documentation that indicates his concern with the interpretation of his images in an artistic or social context, such as is found in the case of his well-known contemporaries Alfred Stieglitz and Lewis Hine.

Horgan was not only a skilled photographer, but an entrepreneur who handled the creative, financial and organizational sides of his business with much success. The financial well-being of an independent photographer was a precarious matter, especially an industrial photographer who constantly needed to find new customers among a clientele whose needs fluctuated with economic conditions. Horgan's business acumen and his talent as a photographer enabled him to provide quite adequately for himself and his family over the course of a long career as a self-employed professional photographer.

THE EARLY YEARS 1859-1878

John Horgan Jr. was the elder son of John Horgan and Catherine Griffin Horgan, immigrants from county Kerry, Ireland. John Horgan Sr. came to this country with his brother (their father died during the voyage) about 1841 at the age of twelve. After living in New Jersey for some time, he finally settled as a farmer in Plugville, a small hamlet outside the town of Le Roy, near Rochester, New York. Two sons were born, John Jr. on June 18, 1859, and James in 1861. When Catherine died in 1868, the children were separated and sent to live with relatives. John's maternal aunt and her husband, Mary and John Coleman, provided a home for him on their farm just outside Le Roy. His father married again in 1872 and this marriage produced eight more children.

Le Roy was a farming community, and it is probable that John Jr. started his working life as a farm laborer. This may have seemed unexciting to an adventurous young man and, at the age of nineteen, he left the farming community of Le Roy for the nearby town of Rochester. Although Horgan spent his teenage years with his aunt, and did not live in Le Roy after 1879, his diaries reveal that he maintained a warm relationship with his father and stepfamily, visiting them regularly throughout his life.

ESTABLISHING A CAREER AS A VIEW PHOTOGRAPHER 1879-1903

Exactly when or how John Horgan Jr. was introduced to photography is not known. However, an advertisement did appear in the *The Le Roy Gazette* on March 8, 1876,³ for a boy, from 17 to 20 years, to learn the photography business. This notice was placed by local portrait and landscape photographer George Hibbard Monroe. One can only speculate that Horgan may have applied for this job or may have seen Monroe at work around Le Roy. (In 1877, Monroe was employed by the young George Eastman "to teach him the wet plate process" of photography.⁴)

Horgan left Le Roy in 1879 to begin work in photography with the Union View Company of Rochester and this provides the first documented link between John Horgan Jr. and a photographic career. However, his name does not appear in the Rochester city directory until 1882 suggesting that he may have spent the intervening years traveling for the company. The 1882 directory entry lists Horgan as a photographer in the employ of E.D.H. Schutter, 110 State Street, the same street on which George Eastman had opened a factory to manufacture “dry plates.” These sensitized plates could be exposed and developed later, as opposed to the “wet plates” which were commonly used at this time, and which required sensitization and development at the time of exposure.

The commercial availability of “dry plates” marked a great advance for outdoor photography, with their ease of use in the field and their increased sensitivity, over “wet plates.” Outdoor photographers could now record views that had not been possible previously. Thus, Horgan began his career as a view photographer at a time when the opportunities in that profession were changing and expanding. By 1884 Horgan had left Rochester and was working as a traveling view photographer in Ohio. At this time he corresponded briefly with his hometown newspaper *The Le Roy Gazette*. On one occasion the newspaper reported that Horgan had photographed two young victims of a lightning strike, when the tragedy occurred nearby.⁵ Then as now, newsworthy images of this type were of interest to the general public and this is an example of the entrepreneurial spirit that was to sustain Horgan’s lifelong career in photography.

Later in 1884 Horgan moved to Elmira, New York, and on December 1, 1884, at age twenty five, he was hired as a traveling photographer by the North American View Company of Rochester. As a photographer, Horgan worked with “drummers” who scouted the area for business and helped in distributing the orders and collecting the payment. In the evenings he developed the “new” dry-plate negatives in his lodgings and then forwarded them to the company for printing. Apparently this lifestyle did not provide a reliable income for Horgan. “[N]ever have I been so hard up for money...” he wrote in a January 1, 1885, diary entry. “[S]ince I have been on the road I have enough coming but Bob had bad luck collecting so could not give me any. I dont want for any thing only have no money to spend...”⁶ As he notes in the diary entry, collection could be difficult, a situation probably exacerbated by poor economic conditions in the country, which had been suffering from a period of depression since 1883.⁷

From December 1884 to December 1885, Horgan traveled in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, covering a total of 4,119 miles, mostly by rail. On February 9, 1885, he made his initial visit to Scranton, Pennsylvania.⁸ Soon afterward, on April 11, 1885, Horgan set foot in a deep mine for the first time at Plymouth, about twenty-five miles south of Scranton. “Went down the Nottingham Mine looked all through,” he noted in his diary, “it is 1,700 feet down it was a great sensation to go down so far,”⁹ a point of view only adventurous individuals would share.

By late 1885 Horgan had given up his traveling job and established himself as a view photographer in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, where he remained for the next two years.¹⁰ The country was beginning an

economic recovery and the iron industry in Johnstown was flourishing, providing many business opportunities for Horgan. There he made fourteen hundred photographs for the Cambria Iron Works, many of which were used to illustrate the company's catalog. This marked a turning point for Horgan's career, affording him recognition as an industrial photographer.¹¹ Neither the prints nor the negatives of these photographs have been located to date, and they may have been lost in the Johnstown Flood of 1889.

The success of his work for Cambria and the business contacts it provided in the iron industry may have given Horgan the impetus to move to Birmingham, Alabama, "the new iron center of the South."¹² Here in 1887, in addition to the iron business, he found substantial employment opportunities for industrial and view photography with railroad, mining and land companies, the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, and local merchants. Some of this work may be seen at the Birmingham Public Library. (In 1890, one of his images, a view of the corpse of the infamous train robber Ruben Burrows, received national circulation.)

By 1891 Horgan had a thriving business that employed several assistants and an "office girl." Unlike many in his profession of that period, Horgan does not seem to have delegated the actual photography to his assistants. There is no documentation to explain this aspect of his business, but Horgan may have felt that his abilities as a photographer gave him the edge over his competitors. A diary entry for January 31, 1891, provides insight into the fierce rivalry for jobs and the manner in which some contracts were obtained: "made Neg[ative]s of Mantels for May and Thomas a \$20.00 job I beat all the rest of the Photoboy[s] on the job in getting the best so got the job." As a view photographer, his day-to-day business was dependent on the weather both for the photography and printing, which utilized natural light to expose the printing-out paper. Often physical strength and stamina were necessary to reach and prepare a site. At times, Horgan had to cover rough terrain, clear underbrush, and perhaps even cut small trees, trim limbs from large trees, and erect his scaffold in order to obtain the required views. Diary entries illustrate the significance of site conditions on his work:

" (Jan. 15, 1891) ...it is awful weather cannot do much went out to Thomas [furnace] but cannot do anything too much smoke... (Jan. 23, 1891) took early train for Thomas and had good light got on my 45 foot scaffold and made the Match Neg[ative]s... (May 9, 1891) got up at 3 a.m. took 3:45 train for Calera to make view of Coosa Bridge had a big lot of cutting to do when I got ready to make neg[ative] the light was not good so will have to wait till tomorrow..."

On May 13, 1891, Horgan bid on his biggest project yet, a job with Richardson Bros. Cotton Plantations of New Orleans, "to take a series of views illustrating the growth of cotton and its preparation for market."¹³ He won the contract to work for Colonel J. S. Richardson, one of the world's major cotton growers.¹⁴ Horgan was to travel in a railroad car custom designed as a darkroom, for his tour of Richardson's

plantations from Memphis, Tennessee, to the Gulf Coast at New Orleans. The assignment took four months, during which time he produced two hundred and forty one 18" x 22" glass plate negatives as well as numerous tintypes that he sold to the local residents along the route. Making excursions on horseback deep into the countryside, Horgan took photographs illustrating the great variety of daily life and work in the rural South. He copyrighted his views, and found lucrative sales in both this country and Europe for many years after his trip. A small part of this work is now at the Denver Art Museum and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta.

A newspaper report notes that while in Birmingham, Horgan "was also employed by the government to record river improvements in the South" and "to exhibit 1,800 photographs at the World's Fair . . . for the states of Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi."¹⁵ It is unclear whether the term "World's Fair" refers to the great 1893 St. Louis State Fair or the World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago. It appears that he visited both cities at this time, and may have exhibited and sold his photographs at each fair.

In any event, 1893 marked another turning point in Horgan's career, when a devastating fire in his studio in Birmingham destroyed much of his work. In addition to this great personal setback, Horgan had to contend with the economic consequences of a deep depression affecting the United States, one which severely impacted industry and resulted in the closing of many businesses and factories.

With his future as an independent view photographer looking grim, Horgan secured a job as a traveling demonstrator for the American Aristotype Company, the major supplier of collodion paper for professional photographers. He was based in St. Louis, Missouri, a large and relatively prosperous city with good transportation links to the rest of the country. Horgan lived there for the next two years, and during this time married Catherine Atchison, a young woman from his hometown of Le Roy. The daughter of an Irish immigrant father who was a blacksmith, and a Canadian mother, Catherine had attended Ingham University in Le Roy and Loretta Abbey in Toronto. Her interests included art, music and public theater.

Around the time of his marriage, Horgan contracted blood poisoning from photographic chemicals he was using while demonstrating at the national photographic convention in St. Louis.¹⁶ A short period of recuperation in Le Roy, however, restored his health and he returned with his bride to St. Louis.

Horgan's job required that he travel frequently. Life in a strange city must have been lonely for his young wife, even though it provided the security of a steady, reliable income. In June 1896, Catherine Horgan returned to her mother's home in Le Roy to await the birth of their first child. A son, William



BLACK & WHITE MIXED IN THE PRESS ROOM

*Courtesy of William Sidney Horgan Jr.
HORGAN PHOTO, 1891*



John Horgan Jr. and Catherine Atchison Horgan, c. 1895, St. Louis, MO. Courtesy of William Sidney Horgan Jr.

Sidney, was born on December 19. Meanwhile, Horgan had temporarily relocated to Auburn, New York, and on April 28, 1897, the family settled in Buffalo.

Horgan continued to travel and demonstrate for the Aristotype Company until 1901. (George Eastman had acquired a major interest in the company in 1899.¹⁷ This may explain why Horgan's obituary notices mention that he traveled for the Eastman Kodak Company for many years.^{18,19,20}) During the time that Horgan traveled and demonstrated to other professional photographers, he must have become skilled in a great variety of printing techniques and familiar with the newly developed types of printing papers that were being marketed.

In August 1901, at the age of forty-two, Horgan obtained a well-paid and exciting job as the official photographer for the Guayaquil and Quito Railroad Company (G & Q) in Ecuador, possibly through contacts made while working at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo that summer. This company, incorporated in New Jersey, was building a railroad linking Ecuador's port of Guayaquil to the capital city of Quito, thus opening the isolated interior to development and providing American investment opportunities.

Horgan's photographs illustrate the difficult challenges encountered by both man and machine during the construction of a railroad through the rugged terrain of the Andes Mountains, and give a wonderful glimpse of an Ecuador—including the Galapagos Islands—unknown to most

Americans. In a letter to the editor of the *Le Roy Gazette*, Horgan describes the rich contrasts within the landscape:

I have traveled over every province of Ecuador and it is wonderful to see the difference in the country and the many climates separated by the mountain ranges and only a few miles, as the buzzard flies (there are no crows in Ecuador) apart. In crossing these ranges the trail often reaches 12,000 to 14,000 feet elevation and one may start out in a rainstorm and in a few hours be in a cold, blinding snowstorm, then down into a beautiful sunshiny valley of fruit and flowers . . .

While living and working in this equatorial environment, Horgan contracted malaria, a health problem that plagued him for the rest of his life.

Horgan initially anticipated working for the G & Q for six months, but the job eventually kept him in Ecuador for fifteen months. A selection of the images he captured there have been preserved by his family.



They include sweeping views of the Andes, reminiscent of the style of western view photographer William Henry Jackson. For many years the Pan American Union employed a number of Horgan's images in their literature.

Upon his arrival in New York, Horgan was reunited with his wife and the couple returned to Le Roy in December 1902. At the end of the month, Horgan accepted employment as the superintendent of the American School of Art and Photography, a correspondence school in Scranton, Pennsylvania.²²

JOHN HORGAN JR. ILLUSTRATING PHOTOGRAPHER OF SCRANTON 1903-1926

On January 7, 1903, John Horgan Jr. and his family moved to Scranton, the center of the anthracite coal industry. The city was a great hub of commerce, with coal, railroading and all the attendant businesses, providing a stimulating and prosperous environment for the Horgan family. The ease of rail travel to Philadelphia and New York, where Horgan had important business contacts, and convenience of rail connections to Le Roy must also have been factors in the decision to move to Scranton.

Little is known of Horgan's first year with the American School of Art and Photography or, indeed, of the mission of the school. Its ambiguous name can be interpreted several ways, considering the national debate at the time on the relationship between "art" and photography.^{23,24,25} It appears that Horgan had



(left) *The G&Q train in Ecuador*
Courtesy of William Sidney Horgan Jr.
HORGAN #305, c. 1902
(right) *TURTLES ON GALAPAGOS ISLES*
Courtesy of William Sidney Horgan Jr.
HORGAN #325, 1902



Stock certificate for the American School of Art and Photography, 1901, courtesy of William Sidney Horgan Jr

relinquished his position as superintendent of the school by September 1903, for on September 3, 1903, a photograph of Horgan as an "instructor" appeared in many magazines in an advertisement for the school.²⁶

By 1904, although still associated with the correspondence school and one of its shareholders, Horgan was soliciting work from local businesses and organizations. In addition, he was still producing photographic albums and prints for the G & Q Railroad, and making frequent trips to the Cotton Exchange in New York to sell his photographs of the South.

Their second child, a daughter Gertrude, was born on February 24, 1904. At this time Horgan was working out of his home, but on June 14, 1904, he rented an office in the Pauli Building on Spruce Street, an elegant address in downtown Scranton. In a diary entry at this time he notes: "bought office furniture ordered showcase [\$]18.00 very busy all day." Horgan kept an office in the Pauli Building until 1922, when he moved to a suite in the nearby Dime Bank Building, taking twenty-five thousand negatives with him.²⁷ Horgan's office was staffed with an "office girl"

and one or two male assistants, who helped develop and print photographs. Occasionally a female printer was employed. His diary entries from this period indicate that he rarely gave photographic assignments to his assistants, and most left his employ after a year. On rare occasions Horgan's wife helped in the office.

Even though Horgan's family and business were well settled in Scranton, he accepted a contract in November 1904 with the La Luz Mining and Tunnel Company. Funded by a group of American investors, the company had recently reopened the old silver mines in the La Luz district of Mexico and was employing "new" mining technology to rework the mines. Horgan left his young family in Scranton and traveled in Mexico for four months, photographing the company's holdings, often under primitive conditions. This work, according to his diary, resulted in an order from the La Luz company for prints, earning Horgan \$3,536.00.²⁸ None of these photographs have been identified at this time.

On returning to Scranton, Horgan immediately resumed his career as an "Illustrating Photographer."^{29,30} With his recent earnings in hand, he bought a touring car, the first of several quality cars he owned during his years in Scranton. They were a source of great pride to him and, in later years, of considerable use in solving the transportation problems encountered in his profession. A relative, who was a child in the 1920's, remembers him driving around the countryside, cornering on two wheels!

Over the next twenty-one years, Horgan amassed a huge client base that included all the major industries, railroads, banks, merchants, lawyers, newspapers, and public and social organizations in the thriving metropolitan area. Adept in the courtroom, he was engaged by Lackawanna County to photograph evidence and testify at several notorious murder cases. A diary notation indicates that he was called to testify before the U.S. Senate in Washington on January 7, 1913. Horgan's photograph was used as evidence by the prosecution in the impeachment proceedings of Commerce Court Judge Robert W. Archbald of Scranton.³¹ During this period Scranton was famous as the "Anthracite Capital of the World" and many of Horgan's clients were coal companies. One of the most important of these was the Delaware and Hudson Company, whose association with Horgan is discussed separately.

The Horgan family rented several houses during their twenty-three year residence in Scranton. A self-sufficient man who never forgot his farming roots, Horgan regularly planted a vegetable garden, noting in his diaries, along with his business appointments, the vegetables he had planted. For a few years, the family also kept chickens.

With each move to a new home, Horgan set up a darkroom in the house, often doing the plumbing and carpentry himself. He enjoyed masculine social interaction and had an active interest in athletics and sports of all kinds, keeping himself in good physical shape throughout his life. At age forty-four, Horgan records the following personal details in his diary: "(Weight) 158 1/2, (Height) 5 11, (Size of my Trouser, waist) 34."³²

He drilled with the National Guard in Scranton until the age of fifty-two, testimony to the physical strength and stamina he possessed even in middle age. Always competitive in his leisure as well as his business life, Horgan won several medals for sharpshooting in the National Guard. Hunting was another of his favorite sports and for some years he was a member of the Spruk Camp Hunt Club in Pike County, Pennsylvania, using his handsome Marlin repeating shotgun.

Horgan and his family enjoyed the theater, concerts, and the many parks and lakes surrounding the city, although family outings were generally combined with business. "(May 21, 1912) took Kit and Gert to W[ilkes] B[arre] came Home via Kingston Neg[ative]s of Fort Pitt school & ch[urch] in Pittston," notes Horgan in his diary. Summer weekends were spent at popular regional resorts, where he displayed his



The Laurel Line inter-urban car #10 in a tunnel

*Courtesy of William Sidney Horgan Jr.
HORGAN #1558, OCTOBER 1905*



*(left) HOME FROM PIKE
December 11, 1921 Horgan on the right,
courtesy of William Sidney Horgan Jr
HORGAN #23156*

*(right) John Horgan Sr. and William Sidney
Horgan Sr., as a child
Courtesy of Mrs. Ursula Fix
HORGAN PHOTO, c. 1904*



photographs and took orders. Such constant hustling for business was certainly one of the reasons for his longevity in a field that produced a number of financial failures.

The family maintained close ties to their relatives—on both the Horgan and Atchison side. To his “country” relatives and friends in Le Roy, Horgan was a “tall dapper man who wore a mustache” and a “colorful, bombastic city guy.” His niece, Mrs. Ursula Fix, remembers her “Uncle Jack” rising at four one morning to photograph a golf course with the desired play of light and shadow. She also recalls that Horgan spent so much time posing people in the exact way he required that few of them were smiling by the time the photograph was taken!³³

During Horgan’s periodic visits to Le Roy, he often visited nearby Rochester. There, in addition to other business, he spent time printing his photographs at the Eastman Kodak Company, perhaps maintaining ties from the days when he worked for the Aristotype Company. In 1910 he notes in his diary, on January 8: “Rochester N.Y. finished and payed E.K. Co [\$]10.95 Met Geo Eastman.” Horgan often related this meeting with the leading figure in the photographic industry to his family and friends.

John Horgan Jr. was actively conducting his photography business when again he contracted blood poisoning through a scratch on his hand, “while about his duties as a photographer.”³⁴ He died on July 8, 1926, at the age of sixty-seven. Horgan’s son William Sidney, known to his family as “Sid,” had musical

talents and was not interested in his father's business, nor was his daughter Gertrude, who became a stenographer. So the business was sold to his former assistant, Wallace Prestwood, who continued it from Suite 411 in the Dime Bank Building, for several years using the Horgan name. The business continues today in Scranton at another location as the "Prestwood Photo Service Incorporated and Camera Shop."

JOHN HORGAN JR. AND THE DELAWARE AND HUDSON COMPANY 1905-1926

Horgan began his association with the Delaware and Hudson Company in 1905.³⁵ His major contracts though, were with the company's subsidiary, the Hudson Coal Company, during the years 1915, 1916, 1917, 1920, 1921, and 1923. Horgan's photographs for Hudson Coal during that time are the primary focus of this book.

By 1921 Horgan had produced nearly seventeen hundred negatives of subjects of interest to the Hudson Coal Company. Many of those taken in the period 1915-1917 were staged tableaux, scenes set in the mines, to illustrate safe versus unsafe mining practices. These images were made in the period corresponding to the passage of Pennsylvania's Workmen's Compensation Act of 1915, and the initiation of a policy among insurance carriers that called for "rating the relative value of each hazard which goes to make up the total accident risk in a coal mine."³⁶

The Pennsylvania legislation was meant to improve safety standards in the mining industry.³⁷ Coal companies that worked at making their mines safer places would pay lower annual premiums for the insurance of their employees. Horgan's photographs offer evidence that Hudson Coal, in assessing the safety conditions of its operations, had considered a wide range of issues, from proper timbering and support methods for mine roofs to preparation and maintenance of first-aid teams for rescue of injured mine workers.

By 1923, according to one of Horgan's diaries, Hudson Coal had paid him \$2,236.80 for his work during an eighteen month period in the years 1922 and 1923. Horgan's images handsomely illustrate the Delaware and Hudson Company centennial publication, *A Century of Progress: History of the Delaware and Hudson Company, 1823-1923*, and *The Story of Anthracite*, 1932. The foreword to *The Story of Anthracite*, which was published after Horgan's death, gives some insight into the reason the company may have contracted with Horgan:

CARRYING INJURED EMPLOYEE ON
STRETCHER INTO MINE HOSPITAL
HORGAN #15259, c. 1916



The purpose of this work is to make clear the story of anthracite—to describe its origin, development, methods of mining and preparation, its human relationships and economic aspects—from the standpoint of experience. If this effort is a means of implanting facts in minds which hitherto harbored fallacies concerning the industry, its purpose will have been accomplished.³⁸

This is an important consideration, as the use of the photographs after Horgan's death does not seem to have been unrelated to the purposes of his work with the company in previous years. For example, Horgan labeled a number of his negatives (some of which were published in *The Story of Anthracite*) "History of Anthracite," suggesting a category of intended use by the company. Perhaps this was a working title for a Hudson Coal Company publication planned during the time Horgan was engaged to make images, but which evolved into *The Story of Anthracite*, published in the 1930s.

The need for a history, or story, of anthracite that would place coal company operatives in a more favorable light with the general public, politicians and state mine inspectors was clearly on the minds of Hudson Coal Company officials, as the foreword to *The Story of Anthracite* demonstrates:

From time to time in the past, particularly during periods of labor unrest or shortage of supply, much publicity has been given to the anthracite industry. In normal times of peaceful labor relations and steady supply, news concerning it appears but rarely in the public press. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that many erroneous impressions and false conceptions concerning the industry are entertained in many quarters.³⁹

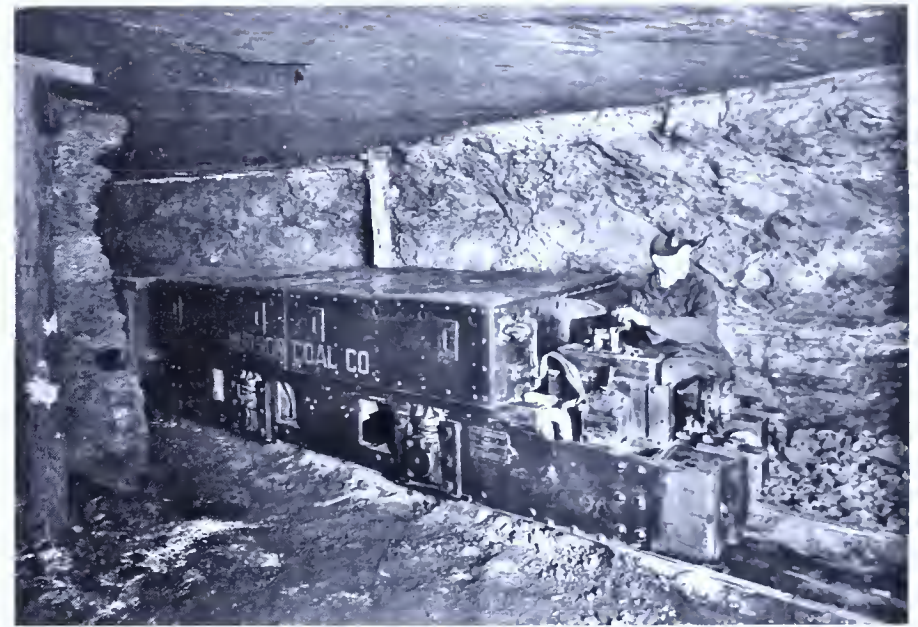
"Peaceful labor relations" were necessary if coal companies were to supply their customers with regular anthracite deliveries. National attention had turned to the hard coal fields of northeastern Pennsylvania at various times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, a major turning point, the great strikes of 1900 and 1902, erupted just prior to Horgan's settling in Scranton. Never before in the history of the region had organized labor been able to bring mine workers together and effectively shut down the anthracite industry.

The United Mine Workers of America were now a force to be respected and the public learned of their situation, in human terms, through national newspapers and periodicals. Additionally, strikes and suspensions in 1906, 1912, 1920, 1922, 1923 and 1925-26 all affected coal deliveries to company customers. Although strikes were costly to the Hudson Coal Company, officials apparently did not ask Horgan to make views of these labor actions. Furthermore, Horgan's diaries do not provide any commentary on the strikes, workers, or conditions resulting from such situations.

Strikes, loss of production, and gains by labor were all costly to Hudson Coal. Yet, these were not the only problems affecting profits; the company also had to contend with increasing regulation, taxation, cost of materials and supplies, litigation, and political pressure. In addition, the company bore the ex-

pense of driving shafts and slopes ever deeper to harvest fresh but thinner veins of coal; the pumping of mine water; the ventilation of underground workings; transportation and coal storage facilities; and replacement of outdated production plants, coal breakers and equipment. All these factors, combined with competition from other fuels, such as natural gas, oil, coke, and bituminous coal, contributed to forcing mine officials to trim their operations for the best economy.

In the decade prior to its centennial in 1923, the Hudson Coal Company had tried to meet the challenge of changing conditions in the anthracite industry by centralizing its production, eliminating some properties, and building new steel breakers such as the Loree in Plymouth, Luzerne County, and the Marvine in Scranton, Lackawanna County. These breakers utilized efficient state-of-the-art coal-processing equipment. Horgan's photographs document both the old and new conditions. Furthermore, his images illustrate changes in mining technology, contemporary methods of mining, mine openings, drifts, tunnels, slopes, planes, shafts, all aspects of the miner's work, machine mining and methods, a variety of underground occupations, transportation, electrification, pumping, timbering, ventilation, hazards, explosions, fires, surface operations such as strip or surface mining, power houses, repair shops, colliery buildings and storehouses, mine workers' wash houses, laboratories, and support facilities. The use of Horgan's photographs by the company, allowed Hudson Coal to create an image of a well-equipped, properly managed company so that "its stockholders have the right to be proud of its history and its record of public service."⁴⁰



*ELECTRIC STORAGE BATTERY
LOCOMOTIVE IN EDDY CREEK MINE
HORGAN #19314, c. 1919*

CONCLUSION

Although John Horgan Jr.'s images exhibit a consistently high standard of artistic and technical quality, his purpose in creating them was essentially to do the best job possible in photographing industrial scenes for the companies that hired him. The use of light and camera positioning, along with balanced composition, is reminiscent of the generation of photographers that immediately preceded him in the "golden era of landscape photography."⁴¹ The strong pictorial quality of his images may stir the present-day viewer's emotions and generate speculation about Horgan's personal intentions in creating these striking images. However, in his diaries and photo captions, Horgan has left little information about his thoughts and feelings toward his work, or about influences upon it. In *Reading American Photographs*, Alan Trachtenberg warns that without an understanding of their historical context, too much meaning

may be inferred from photographs: "For the reader of photographs there is always the danger of overreading, of too facile a conversion of images into words."⁴²

It is for this reason that we have endeavored to write the history of John Horgan Jr.'s life and work, that we might gain some understanding of the man and the images he created. We may never know the limitations or conditions placed on Horgan by those who employed him, or the way this may have influenced his work or caused him to adapt his artistic or aesthetic philosophies.

Perhaps one way to summarize the photographer, John Horgan Jr., is to classify him as an exceptional "documentary photographer"⁴³ who made a variety of views of a number of very significant industries of the developing Americas. In essence, he was not unlike other illustrating photographers of his era in which landscape was not the focus, but the "background"⁴⁴ for his industrial views and today serve as a rich pictorial legacy of other places and times.

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PHOTOGRAPHS MADE FOR THE HUDSON COAL COMPANY BY JOHN HORGAN JR.

The following images represent a selection from the John R. Hennemuth Collection, Manuscript Group 369 (AC80.17), Anthracite Museum Complex, Bureau of Historic Sites and Museums, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. They are part of the work produced by John Horgan Jr. for the Hudson Coal Company. The numbering system utilized for these photographs was started by Horgan at the beginning of the twentieth century. Research suggests that all of the commercial images he made when he resided in Scranton, Pennsylvania (1903-1926) were included in this numbering sequence. The captions in bold upper case lettering are those assigned by Horgan. The location is included when indicated on the negative. Some dates appear on the negatives and some were assigned after consideration of the Horgan image number and related diary entries. A short note on the relevance of the image to the Hudson Coal Company is also given in some cases.





CHAMBER WELL PROTECTED WITH PROPS
HORGAN #14338, c. 1915





FOUR DRUM ELEC. HOIST MOUNTED ON MOV[E]ABLE TRUCK LOADING CAR

Another example illustrating changes in mining technology at the Hudson Coal Co.

HORGAN #15173, c. 1916





MINER DRILLING COAL IN BOTTOM BENCH. OVERHANGING TOP COAL BEING PROPERLY PROPPED UP
Another example illustrating safe mining practices.
HORGAN #15232, c. 1916





MINER CRIMPING CAP ON FUSE WITH TEETH. OPEN LAMP NOT PLACED AT SAFE DISTANCE FROM POWDER BOX
This a staged tableau illustrating unsafe mining practices.
HORGAN #15236, c. 1916





RECEIVING SAFETY LAMPS. LAMPS AT FIRE BOSS OFFICE INSIDE
HORGAN #15258, c. 1916





BIRDSEYE VIEW OF BALTIMORE BREAKER-(LOOKING NORTH)

Baltimore Colliery, Wilkes Barre, Luzerne County, PA.

HORGAN #15406, c. 1917



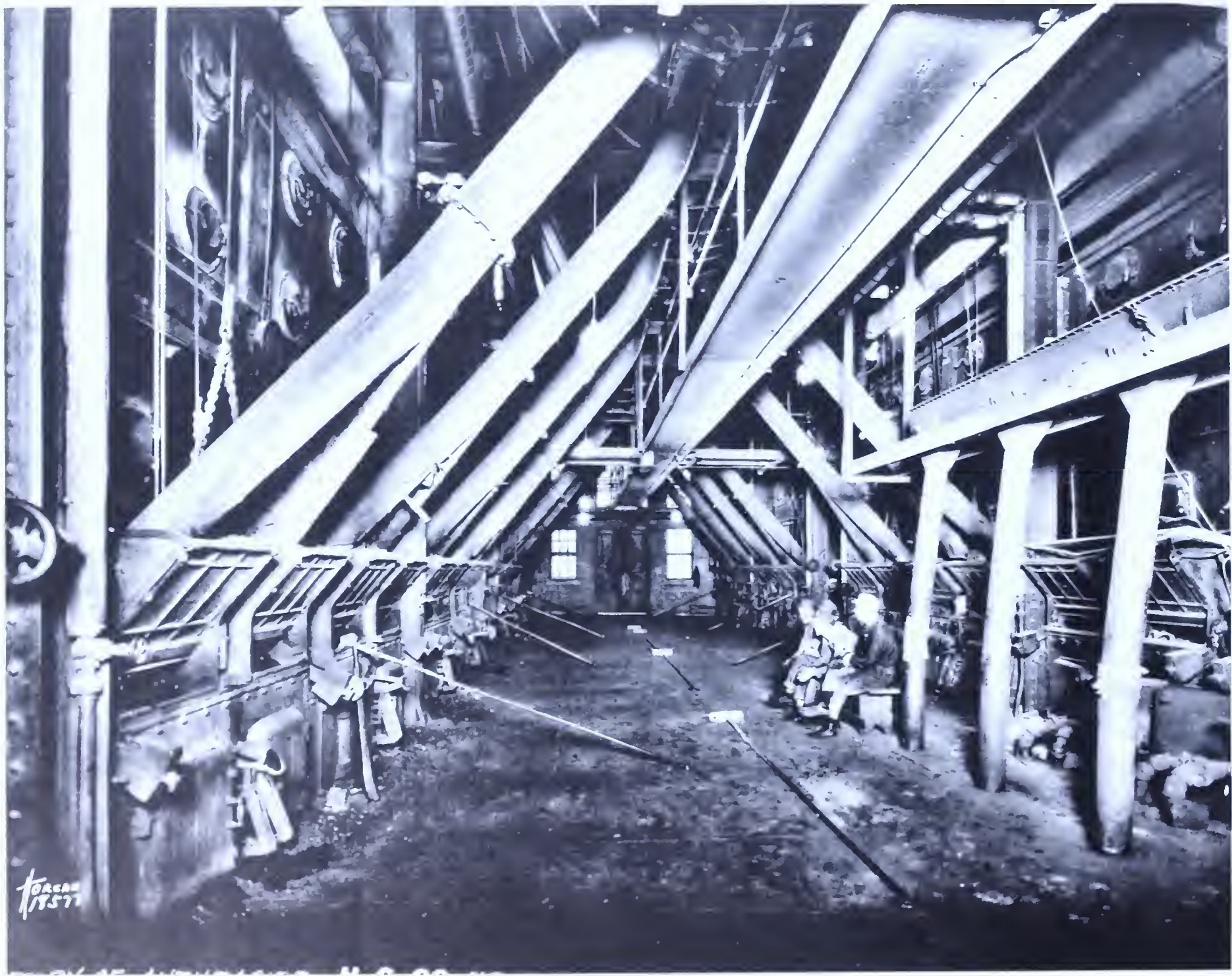


THREE GENERATIONS OF EMPLOYEES
Marvine Colliery, Scranton, Lackawanna County, PA.
HORGAN #18513, c. 1917





RE-LOADER AT DUFFY'S FIELD STORAGE YARD
HORGAN #18524, c. 1917





INSIDE EMPLOYES IN OLD WORKINGS WEARING RESCUE HELMETS

From "History of Anthracite" series.

HORGAN #18600, c. 1917



PUSHING LOADED CAR ONTO CARRIAGE AT FOOT OF SHAFT

From the "History of Anthracite" series.

HORGAN #18610, c. 1917



BREAKER CONS. FROM STA. 2 FEB. 17, 1919

Loree Colliery, Larksville, Luzerne County, PA. Additional inscription on image: PLYMOUTH #5 FROM STA 2 FEB. 17-19 C&C 26° 2 30 PM.

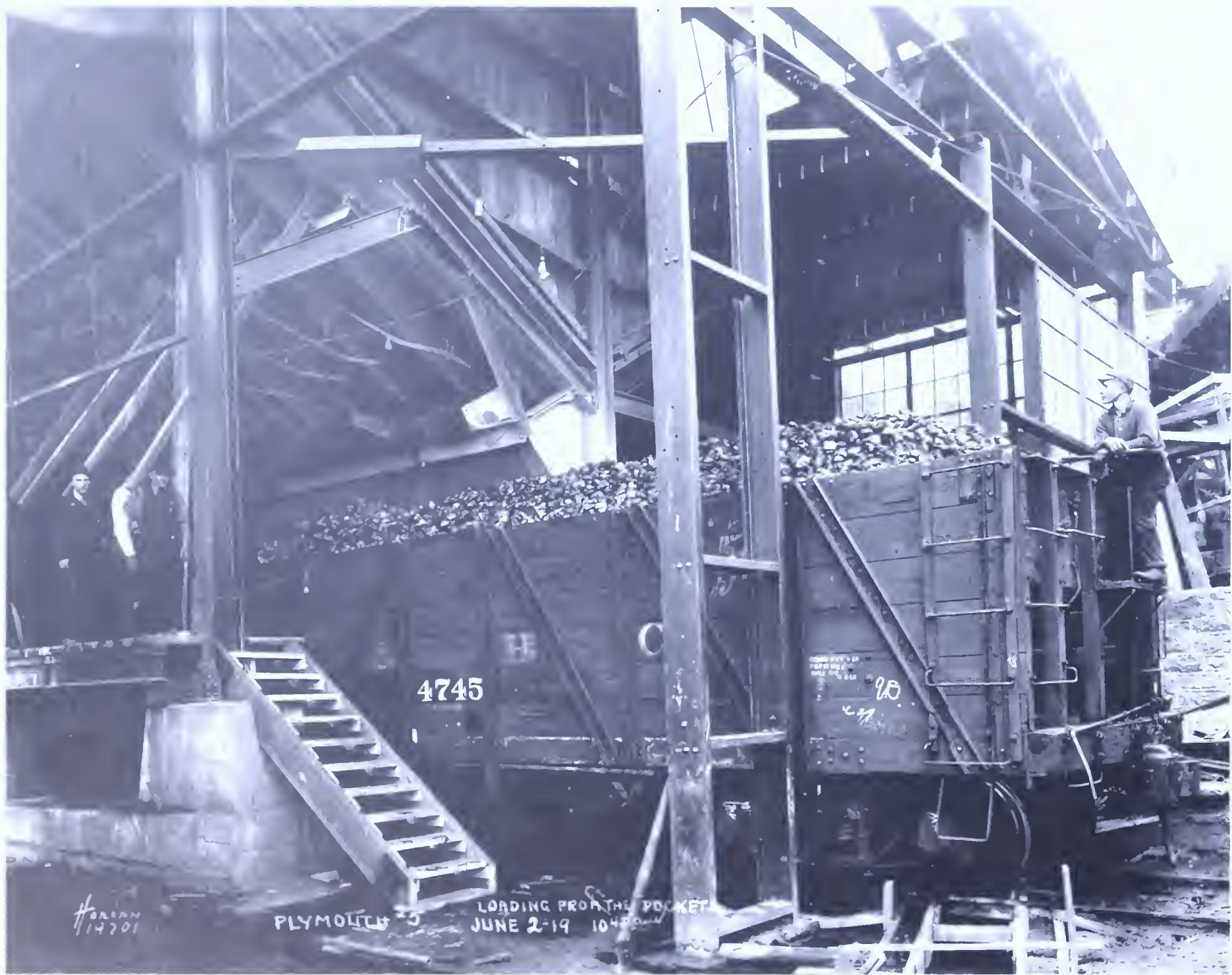
HORGAN #19273, 1919





BREAKER CONS. TOP PICKING TABLES IN OPERATION 6-2-19

Loree Colliery, Larksville, Luzerne County, PA. Additional inscription on image: PLYMOUTH #5 IN FULL SWING TOP PICKING TABLES JUNE 2-19 10 AM.
HORGAN #19700, 1919





INTERIOR OF WASH HOUSE SHOWING LOCKER ROOM

Loree Colliery, Larksville, Luzerne County, PA.

HORGAN #19885, 1919





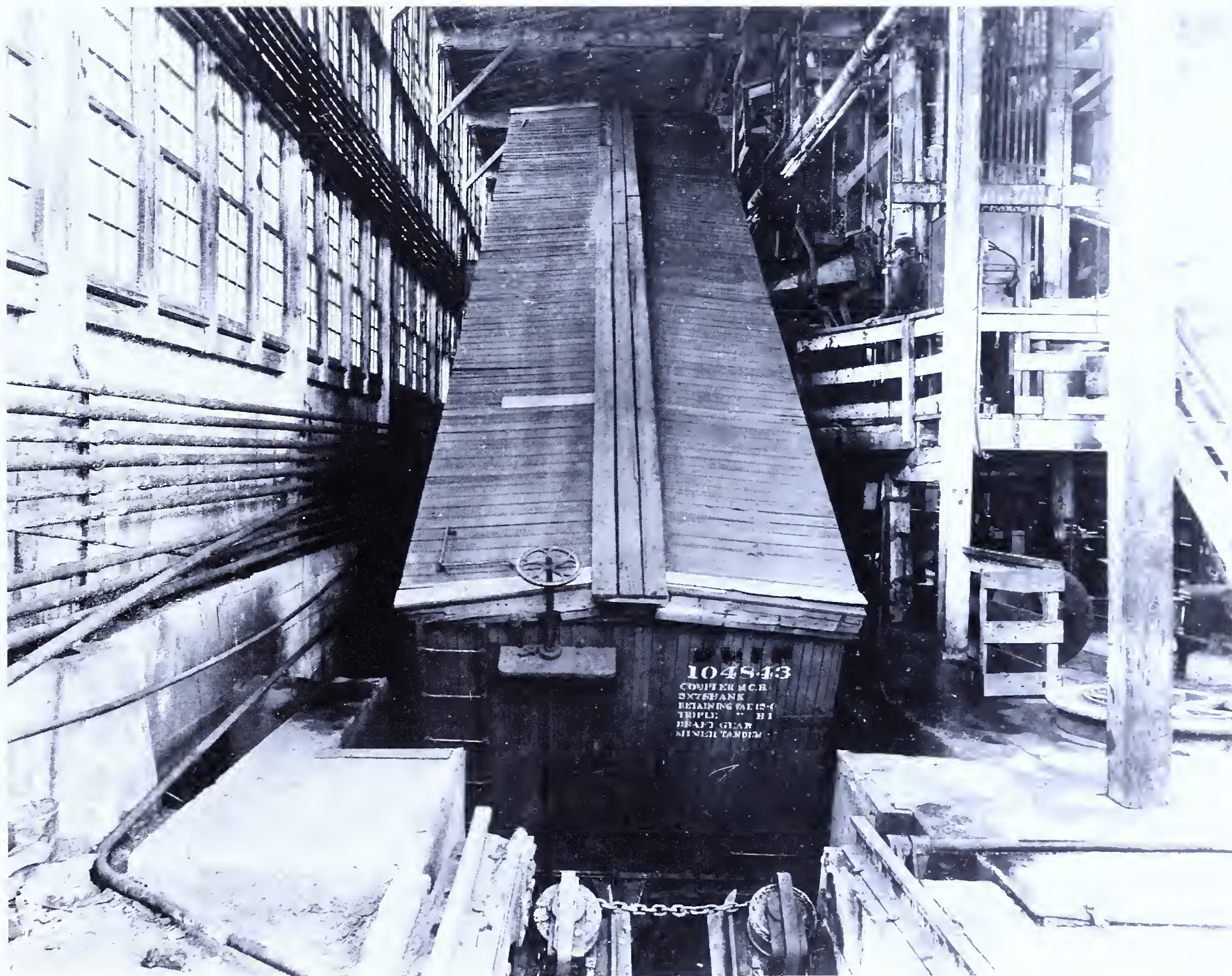
INTERIOR VIEW OF MACHINE SHOP

Providence Repair Shop, Hudson Coal Company, Scranton, Lackawanna County, PA.

HORGAN #20705, 1920



TIMBER YARD SHOWING DERRICK HANDLING MINE CAR TIMBER
Loree Colliery, Larksville, Luzerne County, PA.
HORGAN #20751, c. 1920



OTTUMWA BOX CAR LOADER SHOWING BOX CAR TILTED FORWARD

Olyphant Colliery, Olyphant, Lackawanna County, PA.

HORGAN #20833, c. 1920





BREAKER CON'S. FROM STA. 4 JULY 12, 1920

Marvine Colliery, Scranton, Lackawanna County, PA.

HORGAN #20869, 1920





INTERIOR OF POWER PLANT AFTER FIRE SHOWING CRANE & TURBINE

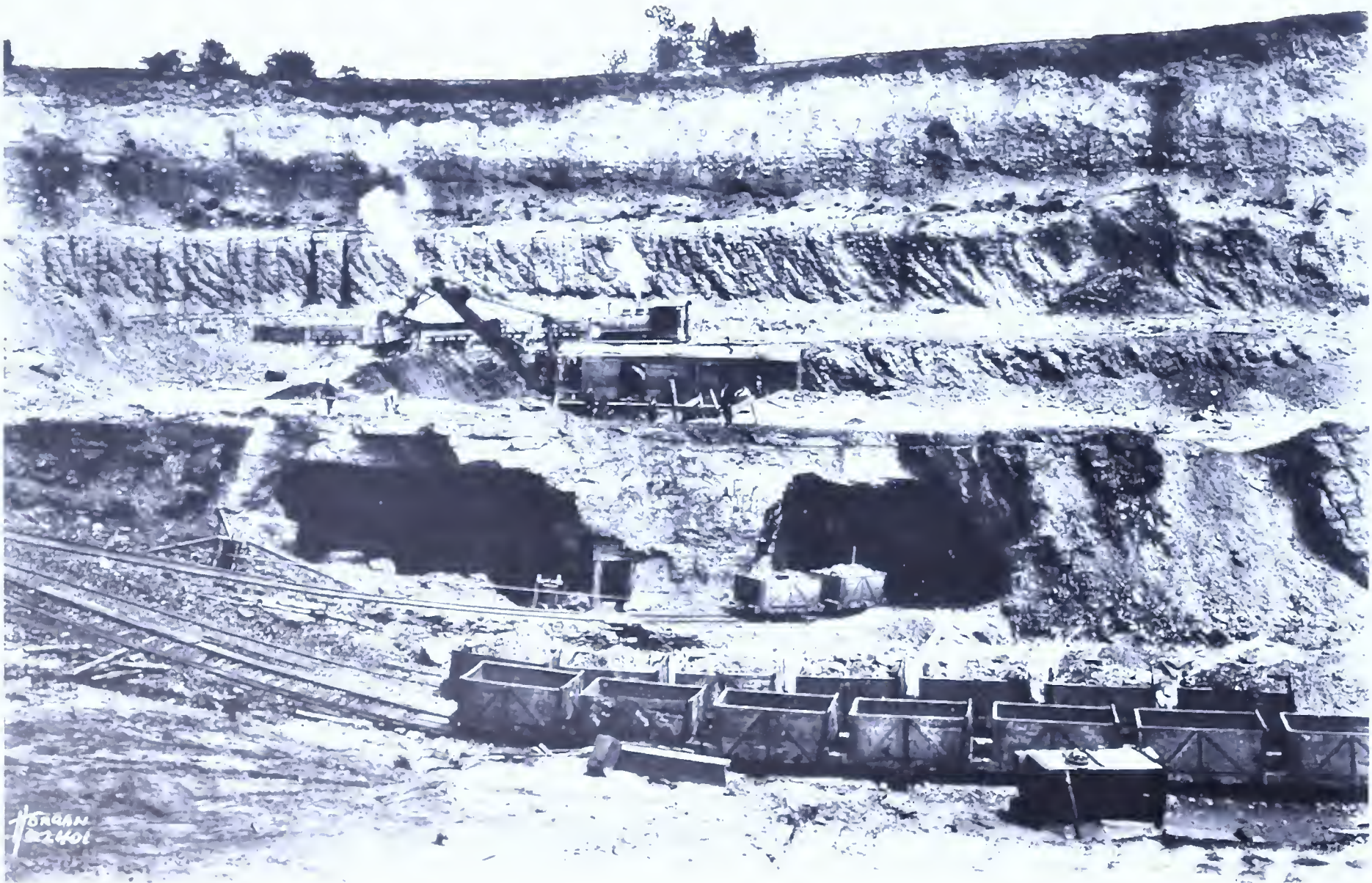
Coal Brook Colliery, Carbondale, Lackawanna County, PA. Additional inscription on image: COALBROOK POWER HOUSE MAR-14-21 3PM
HORGAN #22218, 1921



OLD MULE 28 YEARS HAULING 3 MINE CARS INSIDE
HORGAN #22393, c. 1921



MINE FIRE LOOKING THROUGH OPEN CUT MADE BY STEAM-SHOVEL
Greenwood Colliery, Minooka, Lackawanna County, PA.
HORGAN #22400, c. 1921



NORTH END BOSTON STRIPPING ENTRANCE TO OLD CHAMBERS

Loree Colliery, Larksville, Luzerne County, PA.

HORGAN #22401, c. 1921



VIEW FROM BREAKER SHOWING LIGHT RAILROAD YARD
Marvine Colliery, Scranton, Lackawanna County, PA.
HORGAN #22415, c. 1921



INTERIOR VIEW OF RETAIL SCALE OFFICE
Marvine Colliery, Scranton, Lackawanna County, PA.
HORGAN #22432, c. 1921



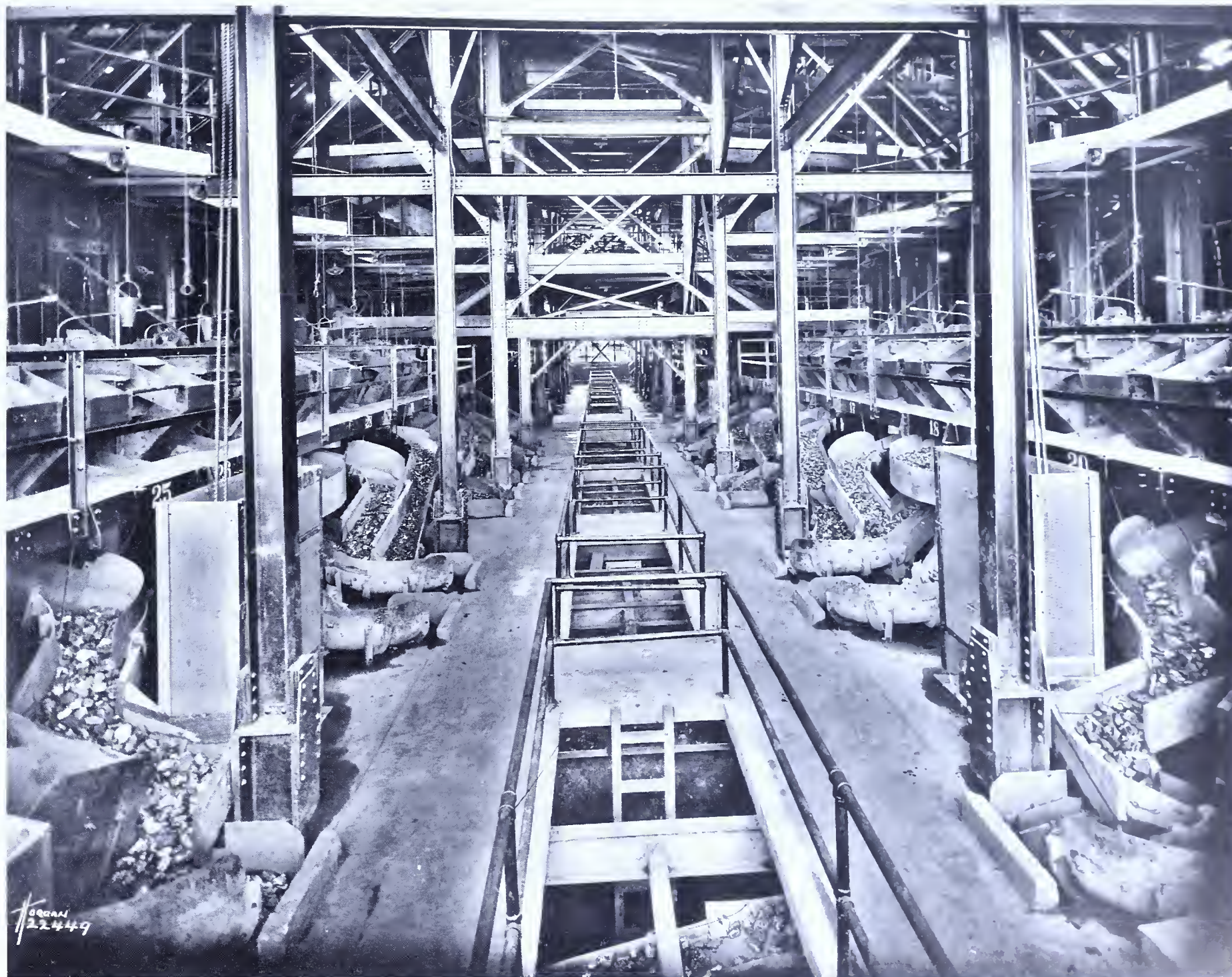
PICTURE OF OLD MULE NAMED BARNEY AGE 24 YEARS

The mule driver is about to brake the mine car wheel with a wooden sprag.

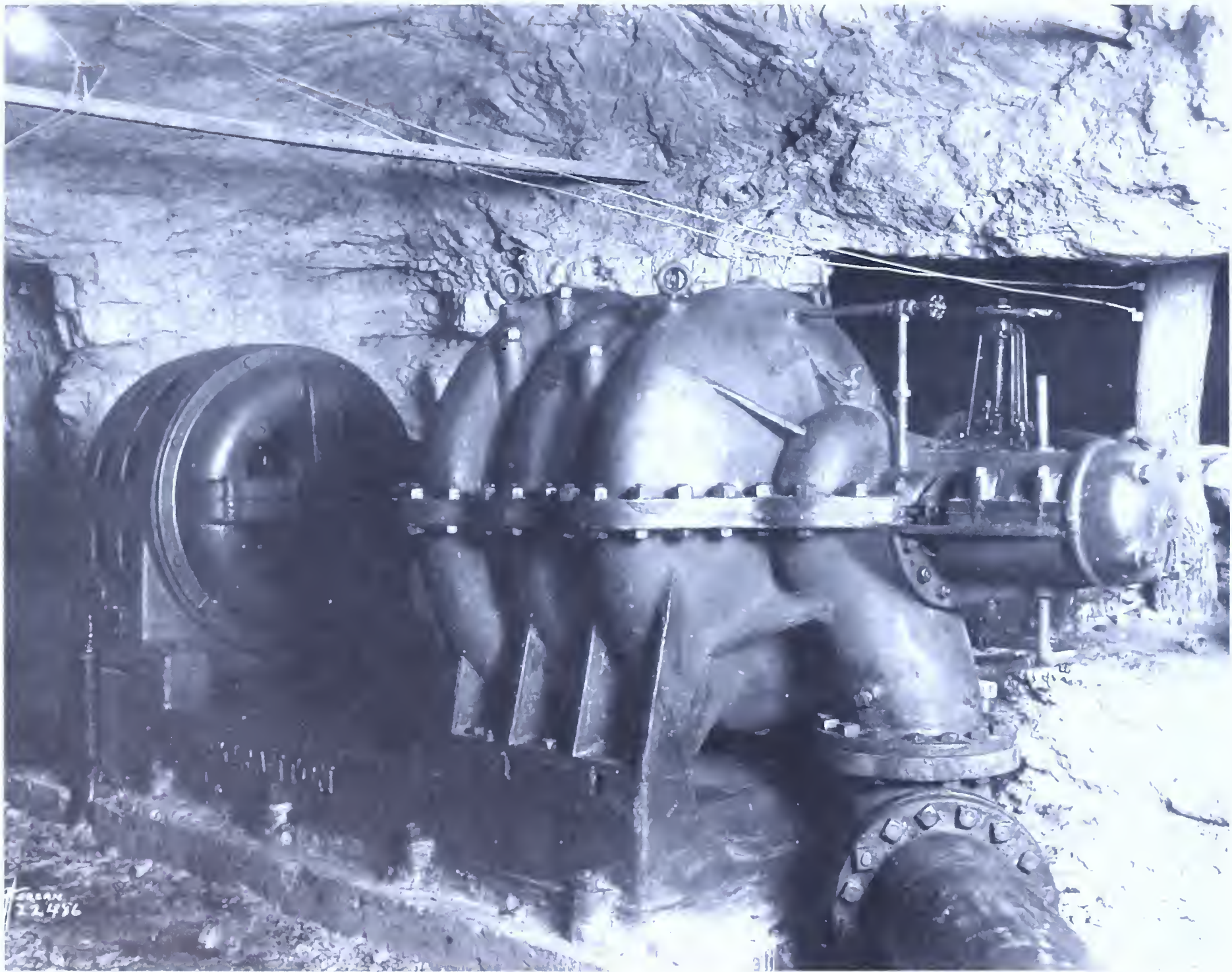
HORGAN #22438, c. 1921



OLD MINER AT BALTIMORE TUNNEL 51 YEARS SERVICE
Baltimore Colliery, Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, PA.
HORGAN #22439, c. 1921



MAIN JIG FLOOR SHOWING CURVED CHUTES FROM JIGS TO LOADING POCKETS
Marvine Colliery, Scranton, Lackawanna County, PA.
HORGAN #22449, c. 1921





FIRST AID CAR AND MINE LOCO. USED ON MOUNTAIN TUNNEL ROAD
Pine Ridge, Parsons, Luzerne County, PA
HORGAN #22491, c. 1921

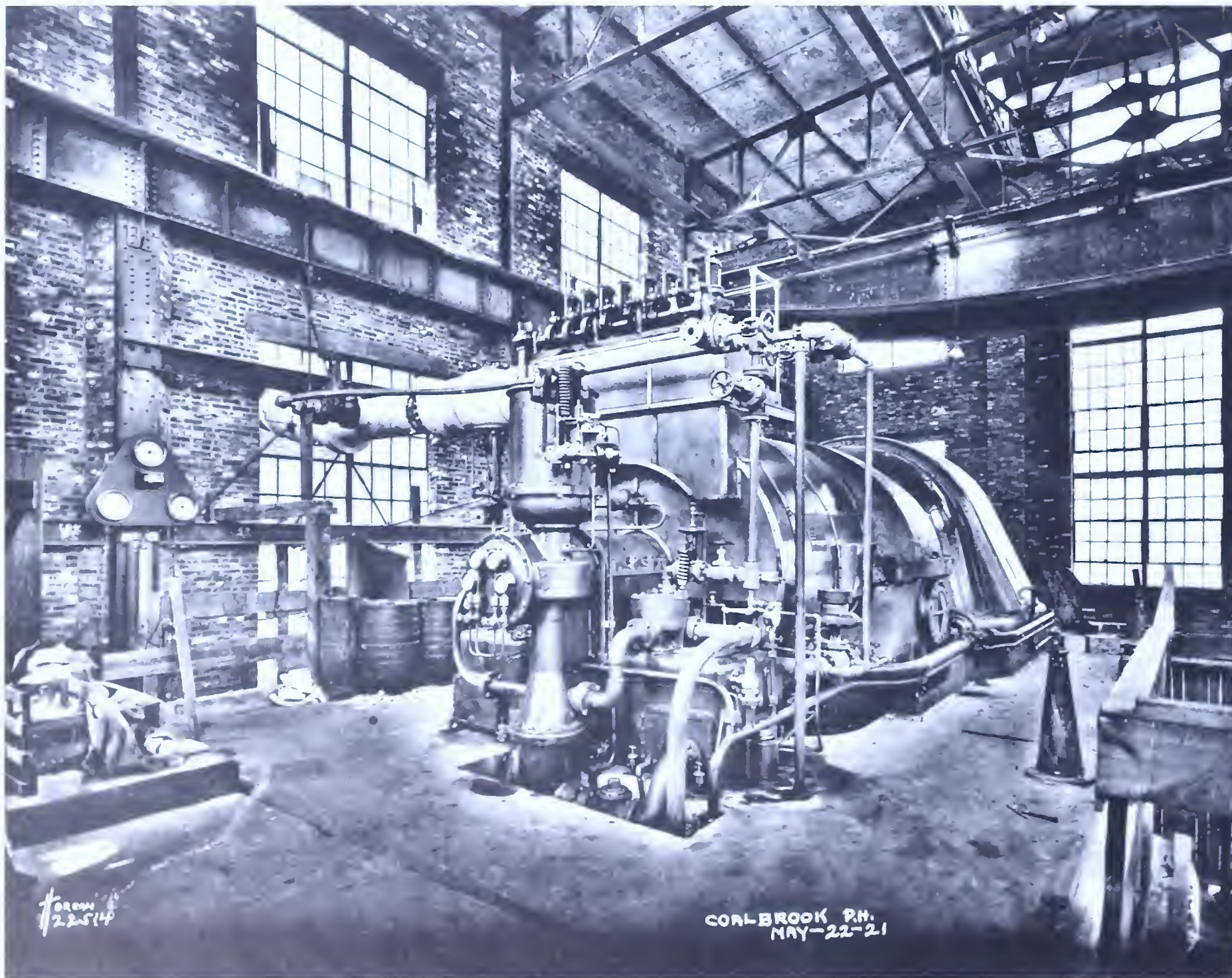




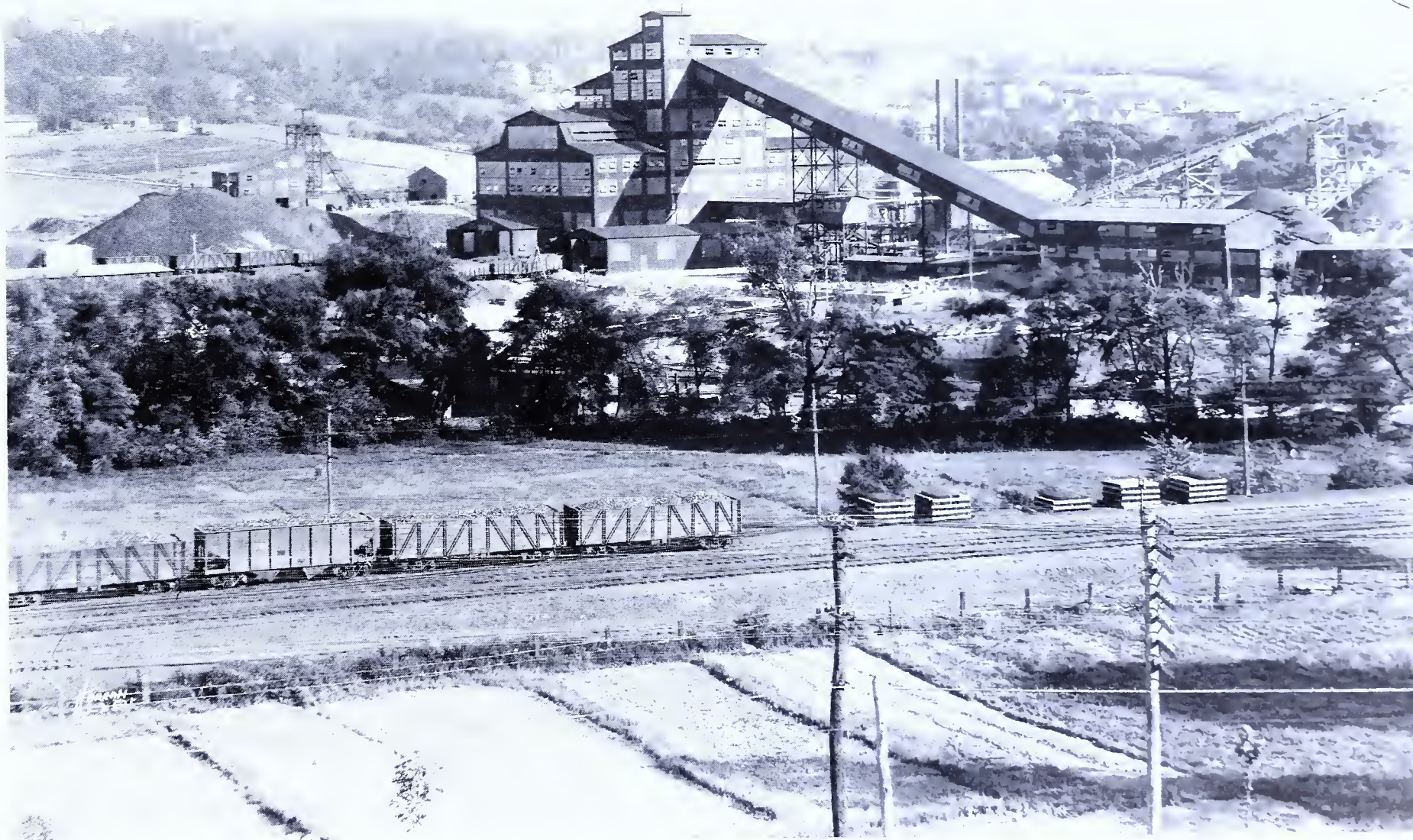
ENTRANCE OF BALT. BED SHOWING HEIGHT OF VEIN

Baltimore Colliery, Wilkes Barre, Luzerne County, PA.

HORGAN #22509, c. 1921



MAY-22-21 INTERIOR OF POWER HOUSE SHOWING END VIEW OF TURBINE
Coal Brook Colliery, Carbondale, Lackawanna County, PA.
HORGAN #22514, 1921



BIRDSEYE VIEW OF MARVINE BREAKER LOOKING SOUTH
Marvine Colliery, Scranton, Lackawanna County, PA.
HORGAN #22571, c. 1921



THREE OLD EMPLOYEES MIKE-TIMMY-DAN ON MINE CARRIAGE

Greenwood Colliery, Minooka, Lackawanna County, PA. "3 brothers having combined service of 151 years with the Hudson Coal Company."

The Story of Anthracite, The Hudson Coal Company

HORGAN #22575, May 31, 1921



5 PM OCT. 14-21
Surface cave-in, probably in Luzerne County, PA.
HORGAN #22987, 1921





WASH HOUSE FIRE HUDSON COAL GRASSY SHAFT 3.15 FEB-7-22
Olyphant Colliery, Olyphant, Lackawanna County, PA.
HORGAN #23280, 1922



HUDSON COAL CO'S GENERAL OFFICE BLDG SCRANTON PA
Scranton, Lackawanna County, PA. Hudson Coal Company's main office building
HORGAN #20674, c. 1920



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